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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION **TRANSMITTAL**

Attorney Docket No. First Inventor or Application Identifier Shigeto Igarashi SIGNAL AMPLIFYING CIRCUIT IN CCD CAMER

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SPECIFICATION

TITLE: SIGNAL AMPLIFYING CIRCUIT IN CCD CAMERA

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a signal amplifying circuit in a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera using an area image sensor for use in a device such as a monitoring video camera.

2. Background Information

Heretofore, as shown in Fig. 5, in a conventional CCD camera, a light signal passed through lens a is transduced into signal S1, by CCD sensor b. The signal S1 is a sampling held in CDS c as signal S1, the signal S1 is processed in processing circuit d and output from signal input part 1 as signal S2 as shown in Fig. 6.

This invention relates to processing circuit d which is explained in more detail. As shown in Fig. 5, OSC (oscillator) 2 generates a synchronizing signal, timing generator 3 drives a CCD, V driver 4 is an iris signal S4 output from processing circuit d for an automatic iris.

To obtain composite video signal S1, processing circuit d is constructed as shown in Fig. 7. Input signal S1 is amplified to a predetermined level V1 in AGC amplifier e and transduced into constant level signal S3. On the other hand, signal S4 amplified in fixed amplifier f is output as a control signal of

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a lens having an automatic iris or control signal for inputting a light limiting circuit.

Operation of above device is as follows:

Signal S3, AGC, amplified in AGC amplifier e is passed by low pass filter g, to remove a useless wide frequency component, passed through gamma correction circuit h, white clip circuit i, composite sync mixer j, driver k (matching to 75 ohm line) and output as a video output signal S2 shown in Fig. 6. In the composite video output signal S2, the S/N (signal to noise) ratio is set to more than 40dB(1%). This invention concerns the S/N ratio.

Problems to be solved by this invention.

If an object is illuminated by a sufficient light source of more than 0.02 lux, the S/N ratio is kept more than 40dB(1%) and no problems occur, but in low illumination such as night, photographing is impossible. However, in night photographing, it is desired to broaden the range of illuminating until 0.02 lux under a wrong S/N ratio.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This invention intends to eliminate said drawbacks, and an object of this invention is to provide a signal amplifying circuit in a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera in which under a sufficient object illuminating conditions (normally more than 0.02 lux) photographing normal circuit construction (Figs. 5 and 7), while under a low object illuminating condition,

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photographing while ignoring the S/N ratio, by inserting auxiliary amplifying circuit m or raising the amplification factor of AGC amplifier e.

Namely, in this invention when photographing at normal object illumination, the photograph is at a high S/N ratio and high grade, but when photographing at a low object illumination, the photograph is at high noise and ignoring the utility 20db S/N ratio (noise component 10%).

The detection means of said low object illumination is an output level of fixed amplifier f or lowering of the video output level (Fig. 2).

The above and other objects, advantages and novel features of this invention will be more fully understood from the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numbers indicate like or similar parts throughout wherein:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a first embodiment of this invention.

Fig. 2 (A) shows the relation of object Lux (abscissa) and video output voltage (ordinate) of a prior device (dotted line) and this invention. (B) shows the relation of object Lux (abscissa) and S/N ratio (ordinate) of this invention. (C) shows the relation of object Lux (abscissa) and gain of auxiliary amplifying circuit m (ordinate) of this invention.

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Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a second embodiment of this invention.

Fig. 4 is a block diagram of a third embodiment of this invention.

Fig. 5 is a block diagram of a conventional CCD camera.

Fig. 6 is a graph of video output signal S2.

Fig. 7 is a block diagram of the processing circuit d in a conventional CCD camera.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

According to claim 1 of this invention, signal processing circuit d of a video camera using a CCD, area sensor etc. is increased in an auxiliary amplifying circuit m, the amplification degree of the auxiliary amplifying circuit m being raised according to necessity so as to maintain the video output voltage at a predetermined voltage and vary the amplification degree of the processing circuit d so that the range of photographing is broadened.

According to claim 2 of this invention, signal processing circuit d of a video camera using a CCD, area sensor etc. provides an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m, of high S/N ratio, low amplification degree and automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m, of low S/N ratio, high amplification degree, according to necessity, it is possible to selectively use automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m, of high S/N ratio or automatic gain

control auxiliary amplifying circuit m, of low S/N ratio.

According to claim 3 of this invention, signal processing circuit d of a video camera using a CCD, area sensor etc. the function of said two automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuits m_1 and m_2 in claim 2 are included in one AGC amplifying circuit em which functions are switched by outer switching.

According to claim 4 of this invention, to detect the change of object illumination, the output voltage or the signal level in signal amplifying process is detected.

Embodiments.

First Embodiment.

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Fig. 1 illustrates the first embodiment of this invention.

As shown in Fig. 1, in this invention, auxiliary amplifying circuit m is newly inserted between low pass filter g and gamma correction circuit h in a conventional circuit shown in Figs. 5 and 7 which raises the amplification degree by detecting the variation in the video output voltage (Fig. 2). The amplification degree of the auxiliary amplifying circuit m changes from 0 dB to 20 dB.

Operation of above device is as follows:

In normal photography, the amplification degree is 0 dB.

AGC level detector r monitors video output signal S_2 and if the image signal is lower than 0.72v, the output of level detector r changes and the amplification degree of the auxiliary amplifying circuit m increases.

By said feedback operation, the video output voltage is maintained at a regular voltage of 0.72v.

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In the first embodiment, auxiliary amplifying circuit m is newly inserted between low pass filter g and gamma correction circuit h but may be inserted between gamma correction circuit h and white clip circuit i, or between AGC amplifier e and low pass filter g, or between signal input part 1 and AGC amplifier e.

The above relationships are shown in the graphs of Figs. 2

(A), (B), (C). Fig. 2 (A) shows the relationship of object Lux (abscissa) and video output voltage (ordinate) of the prior device (dotted line) compared with this invention. The hatched lines shows the broadened range for photographs in this invention. Fig. 2 (B) shows the relationship of object Lux (abscissa) and S/N ratio (ordinate) of this invention. Fig. 2

(C) shows the relationship of object Lux (abscissa) and gain of auxiliary amplifying circuit m (ordinate) of this invention. In the prior device, as shown in Fig. 2 (A), dotted line indicates the prior device, photographing is impossible at object Lux of 0.02 Lux (S/N ratio is 40 dB).

In this invention, as shown in Fig. 2 (C), the object Lux is lower than 0.02 Lux, the amplification degree increases, and photographing is possible until an object of Lux 0.002 Lux. But the S/N ratio is lowered to 25 dB as shown in Fig. 2 (B). Second Embodiment.

Fig. 3 shows the second embodiment of this invention.

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As shown in Fig. 2, in the second embodiment, in signal processing circuit d of video camera using a CCD, area sensor etc. an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_1 of high S/N ratio amplification degree 0 dB to 26 dB and an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_2 of low S/N ratio amplification degree 0 dB to 46 dB are provided. According to necessity, it is possible to selectively using automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_1 of high S/N ratio or automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_2 of low S/N ratio by switch S. V_{DD} is an electric source.

As shown in Fig. 2 (C), the object illumination is higher than 0.02 Lux, amplification degree automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_1 of high S/N and low amplification degree 0 dB to 26 dB works. For an object illumination lower than 0.02 Lux, high amplification degree automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit m_2 works, and the amplification degree increases. However the S/N ratio is lower than 25 dB as shown in Fig. 2 (B). Third Embodiment.

Fig. 4 shows the third embodiment of this invention.

As shown in Fig. 4, in the third embodiment, two automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuits m_1 m_2 are provided in one AGC amplifying circuit em and their amplification degrees are changed by switch S and voltage or current.

Maximum amplification degrees are 0 dB to 26 dB and 0 dB to 46 dB and their amplification degrees are selected by switch S. Level of entering light are detected by level detecting circuit r and controls the switch S and set the amplification degree to a suitable value.

As explained in the construction, the same effects are accomplished.

Effect of this invention.

According to this invention, in the case of sufficiently bright object, photographing is performed by conventional circuit, in the case of insufficient bright object, inserting auxiliary amplifying circuit m, m_1 , m_2 or em, ignoring the S/N ratio, and raising the amplification degree, in the case of a sufficient bright object, photographing is performed by high S/N ratio, and high degree, in the case of insufficient bright object, inserting auxiliary amplifying circuit m, m_1 , m_2 or em, and ignoring S/N ratio, utility photographing is possible.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1. In a signal amplifying circuit for a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera, the improvement comprising providing an auxiliary amplifying circuit m, amplification of the degree of the auxiliary amplifying circuit m being raised according to necessity so as to maintain the video output voltage at a predetermined voltage and vary the amplification degree of the processing circuit (d) to broaden the range for photographing.
- 2. In a signal amplifying circuit for a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera the improvement comprising providing an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_1) having a high S/N ratio, and low amplification degree and an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_2) of low S/N ratio, and high amplification degree, and selectively using said automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_1) of high S/N ratio or said automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_1) of high S/N ratio of low S/N ratio as needed.
- 3. A signal amplifying circuit in a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera as claimed in claim 2, including providing in a signal processing circuit (d) of a video camera with the functions of said two automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuits (m_1, m_2) in one AGC amplifying circuit em, switching said functions by outer switching.
- 4. In a signal amplifying circuit for a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera as claimed in claim 1, including providing a

detecting means to detect a change of object illumination, and detecting the output voltage or the signal level in signal amplifying process.

- 5. In a signal amplifying circuit for a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera as claimed in claim 2, including providing a detecting means to detect a change of object illumination, and detecting the output voltage or the signal level in signal amplifying process.
- 6. In a signal amplifying circuit for a CCD (Charge Couple Device) camera as claimed in claim 3, including providing a detecting means to detect a change of object illumination, and detecting the output voltage or the signal level in signal amplifying process.
- 7. In a signal amplifying and processing circuit for a CCD camera the improvement comprising; an auxiliary amplifying circuit (m) in said CCD camera signal amplifying circuit; said auxiliary amplifying circuit constructed to increase the amplification during low light levels to maintain the video output voltage at a predetermined voltage and vary the amplification degree of the CCD camera processing circuit; whereby the range of photography is broadened.
- 8. The circuit according to Claim 7 in which said auxiliary amplifying circuit comprises an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_1) having a high S/N ratio and low amplification degree and an automatic gain control auxiliary

amplifying circuit (m_2) having a low S/N ratio and high amplification degree; and selective means for selecting said high S/N auxiliary amplifier or said low S/N auxiliary amplifier.

- 9. The circuit according to Claim 8 in which said high S/N auxiliary amplifier and low S/N auxiliary amplifier are incorporated into an existing AGC amplifier in said CCD camera amplifying and processing circuit; said selective means including a switch for switching between said high S/N auxiliary amplifier and low S/N auxiliary amplifier.
- 10. The circuit according to Claim 9 in which said selective means includes a detector for detecting object illumination and signal level output voltage of said CCD signal amplifying and processing circuit.
- 11. The circuit according to Claim 8 in which said selective means includes a detector for detecting object illumination and signal level output voltage of said CCD signal amplifying and processing circuit.
- 12. The circuit according to Claim 7 in which said selective means includes a detector for detecting object illumination and signal level output voltage of said CCD signal amplifying and processing circuit.
- 13. A method of improving a CCD camera signal amplifying and processing circuit comprising; inserting an auxiliary amplifying circuit in said CCD camera signal processing circuit

for maintaining the video output voltage at a predetermined level during low light conditions and vary the amplification degree whereby the range of photography is broadened.

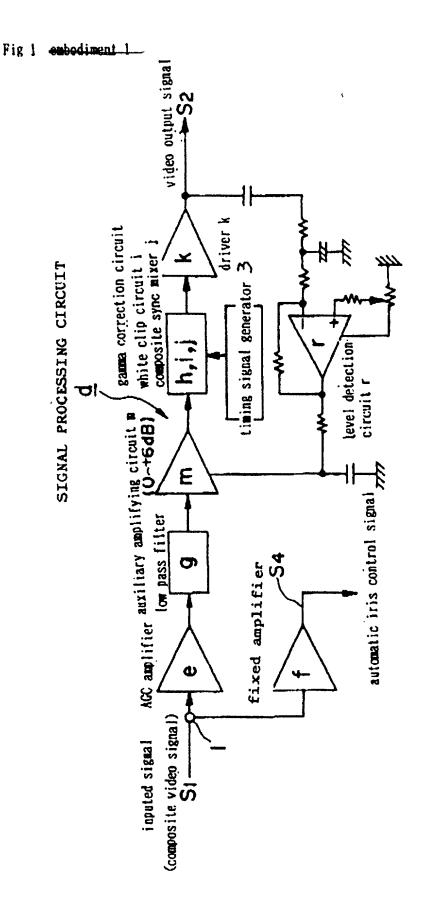
- 14. The method according to Claim 13 comprising insert an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_1) having a high S/N ratio and low amplification of an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifying circuit (m_2) having a low S/N ratio and high amplification; and selecting an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifier as needed.
- 15. The method according to Claim 14 including inserting said pair of automatic gain control amplifier (m_1, m_2) in existing AGC amplifier in said CCD camera signal processing circuit.
- 16. The method according to Claim 15 in which said step of selecting an automatic gain control auxiliary amplifier includes detecting a change in object illumination and signal level output voltage of said CCD signal amplifying and processing circuit.

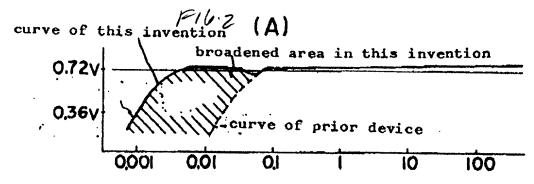
ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Object: To broaden the range of photographing of object, until illumination of 0.02 lux.

Construction: In the case of sufficient bright object, photographing is performed by a conventional circuit at a high S/N ratio, at a high degree. In the case of an insufficient bright object, inserting auxiliary amplifying circuit m, m_1 , m_2 or em and ignoring the S/N ratio, and raising the amplification degree. In the case of sufficient bright object, photographing is performed by high S/N ratio, and high degree, in the case of insufficient bright object, an auxiliary amplifying circuit m, m_1 , m_2 or em is inserted ignoring the S/N ratio until utility noise composite of 20dB (10%).

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Pig 2 (A) object Lux (abscissa) and video output voltage (ordinate) of prior device (dotted line)

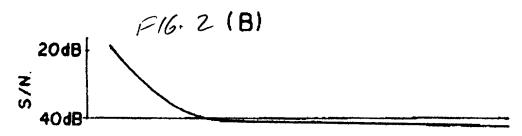


Fig 2 195 (B) object Lux (abscissa) and S/N ratio (ordinate) of this invention.

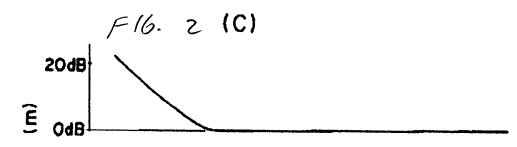
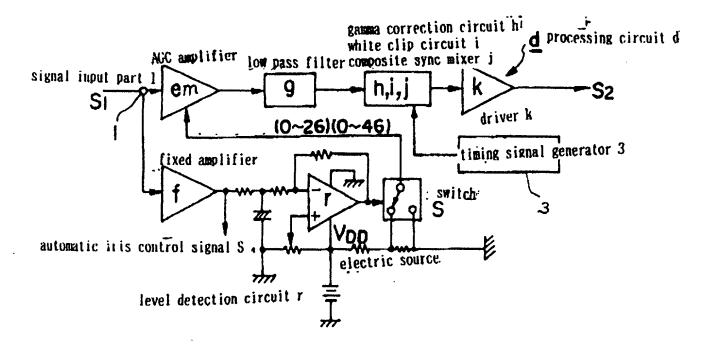
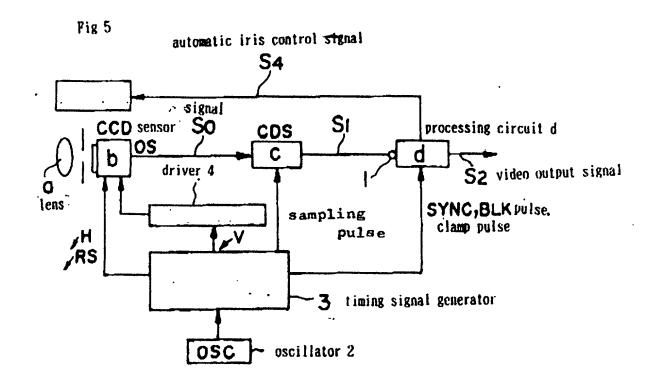


fig 2(C) the relation of object Lux (abscissa) and gain of auxiliary amplifying circuit m (ordinate) of this invention.

Fig 4. embodiment-3

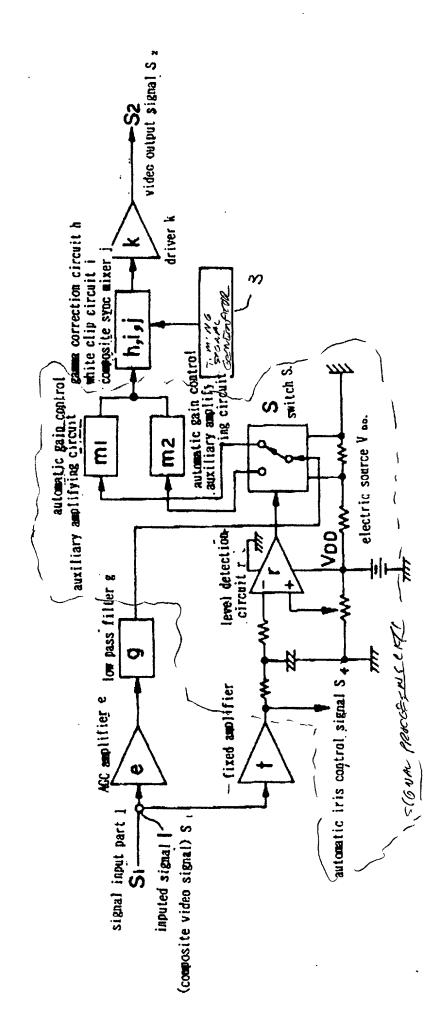


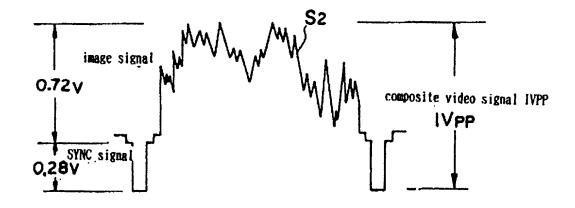


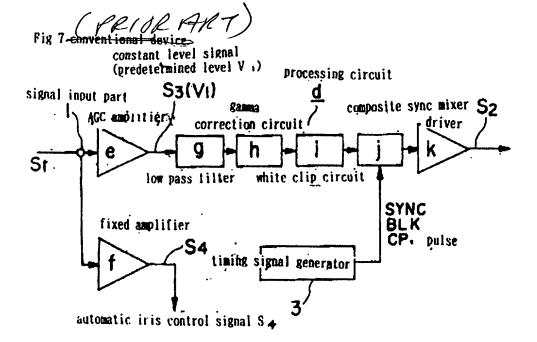
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Pig 3. Embodiaent 2.

Signal processing circuit d







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SIGNAL AMPLIFYING CIRCUIT IN CCD CAMERA	SIGNAL AMPLIFYING CIRCUIT IN CCD CAMERA
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Prior Foreign Application(s)

外国での先行出験 11-35603 Japan (Number) (Country) (番号) (国名) (Number) (Country) (番号) (国名)

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I hereby claim foreign priority under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119 (a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT International application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or PCT International application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Priority Not Claimed

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i hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

(Application No) (Filing Date) (出顧日)

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT International application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of application and the national or PCT International filing date of application.

(Status Patented, Pending, Abandoned) (现况: 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

(Status Patented, Pending, Abandoned) (現況: 特許許可済、係属中、放棄済)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Japanese Language Declaration

(日本語宣言書)

委任状: 私は下記の発明者として、本出順に関する一切の 手続きを米特許商標局に対して遂行する弁理上または代理人 として、下記の者を指名いたします。 (弁護士、または代理 人の氏名及び登録番号を明記のこと)

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (list name and registration number)

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